

Accept Yourself

But I want to Be Thinner!

This is a statement I hear a lot. You recognise that you have reached your Lowest Maintainable Weight, but you do not want to accept it. You really want to be thinner. You are thinking, I don't like how I look at this weight. You can do one the following things if you are unhappy with your Lowest Maintenance Weight.

- ⌘ **Continue to enrich your life.** If you haven't already, it is now time to do all the things you put off until you lost weight. The richer your social, family, work, spiritual, intellectual, creative, and recreational life, the less you will focus on your weight. Compared to these important aspects of your experience, the desire to be even thinner is really superficial, isn't it?
- ⌘ **Focus on the parts of your body that please you the most.** I'll bet your automatic tendency is to focus on the parts of your body that you don't like. Of course, you are going to feel dissatisfied. Instead, focus on the parts that you do like.
- ⌘ **Say to yourself, Oh, well.** Think about how you have been able to accept a lesser goal in other parts of your life. How did you come to peace with it? Do you still struggle every day because your job is not as satisfying as you want, your home doesn't look the way you would like it to, you don't have as much time as you would like for recreational activities? Or have you come to accept these imperfections in your life? Have you said, Oh, well, I'm not crazy about this aspect of my life, but I guess I can't have everything....and I'm glad that I at least have good friends, a good job, a hobby I love. You might need to do the same with your weight.
- ⌘ **Focus on how you have improved.** You might not be as thin as you would like, but how many of the benefits of weight loss have you achieved? Do you look better than you used to? Do you get more compliments? Are you wearing different clothes? Do you have more self-confidence? Do you feel more in control? Do you feel better about yourself? Do you have more energy? Are you healthier? Do you feel less self-conscious? Focusing on all the benefits you have derived instead of on an unrealistic number on the scale will make you feel better.

- ⌘ **Change your comparison.** If you compare yourself with people who weigh less than you or if you compare yourself to what you wish you weighed, you will always be unhappy. Change the comparison. Contrast how you look today with how you looked when you first started this program.
- ⌘ **Prepare yourself mentally before you weigh yourself.** You will feel disappointed if you continually expect to see your Lowest Achievable Weight whenever you step on the scale. Before you weigh yourself, remind yourself of your Lowest Maintainable Weight. Also remind yourself that you will probably weigh between 2 pounds more to 2 pounds less than that number. This way, you will be happy, rather than disappointed, when the scale shows that you have maintained. If you gain more than 2 pounds, tell yourself that you now have the skills to solve the problem.
- ⌘ **Accept compliments from others.** When others tell you how wonderful you look, you might silently say to yourself, but I should look better. If so, make sure to respond to that sabotaging thought. Try to see things from the speakers' points of view. They are not thinking you should look even better. They are just thinking you look good. And if you don't already respond to such compliments graciously, make sure to always thank people without any qualification. Do not say, Thank you, but.....just say, Thank you.
- ⌘ **Act "as if".** Imagine how you would think, feel and act if you were currently at your ideal weight. As you go through the day, pretend you are at that weight. If you do, chances are that you will stand a little taller, be less self-conscious, and project greater self-confidence. If you continually act "as if", you will eventually stop pretending and gradually become more satisfied.

You might instantly be able to accept your Lowest Maintainable Weight without struggle. Or you might have to do the tasks above to increase your acceptance over time. Work at it. Discuss it with your friends and your weight loss coach. What a shame if you can't fully enjoy your new body and you continue to go through life feeling dissatisfied. How wonderful it will be when you stop struggling and feel really good about where you are.

How to Stay at Your New Weight

The first thing I want you to do when you reach your Lowest Maintainable Weight is give yourself lots of credit. It is wonderful that you got to this point! Did you think when you first started that you would really get here? Well, you have! It is a major accomplishment – you should be very proud of yourself. Okay, now you need to learn how to stay there:

- ☆ **Continue to weigh yourself once a week and attend your monthly maintenance session.** All the maintainers I have worked with found that they needed to be vigilant about their weight. The only surefire method is to habitually use the scale once a week and remain accountable by attending your maintenance session each and every month. Those who stopped weighing themselves and attending their session usually did fine for a period of time (months), but eventually they started gaining again.
- ☆ **Recommit yourself if you gain 3 pounds.** Three pounds seems to be the magic number according to the maintainers I spoke to, if they went 3 pounds above their Lowest maintainable Weight, they were likely to continue gaining. If you gain 3 pounds, you don't have to do every task in the program, but I do advise you to reread the program days to see which skills you should reinstate. Sometimes, it is just a matter of putting a plan in writing, measuring your food, and monitoring what you are eating for a couple of weeks.
- ☆ **Create a Maintenance Advantages Response Card.** Create a new card that reflects all the reasons that you don't want to regain weight. Use the Advantages Response Card you created before you started to lose weight for help in creating your card for maintenance. What benefits of weight loss have come true for you? Have you experienced additional unexpected advantages that you hadn't written on your card? List all of these on your new card, after the following sentence: "I want to maintain my weight loss because I want to continue to..." Pull it out when you need it, whenever you are tempted to eat more or exercise less.
- ☆ **Anticipate the amount of effort required for maintenance.** Have you heard that it is harder to maintain our weight loss than it is to lose it initially? I have not found this to be true amongst the clients I have worked with. The course of maintenance frequently follows the same course as dieting. It's easier in the

beginning, at some point it gets more difficult, and then it gets easier again. It stays easier more of the time, with intermittent periods when it's more difficult. It is important for you to have this expectation, or you will be disappointed when maintenance occasionally requires more effort. If you don't realise that this is normal, you might get discouraged, put in less effort, and then regain weight. Make yourself a Response Card to remind yourself that maintenance is supposed to be hard at times, but that it will get easier again.

- ☆ **Give yourself Credit** multiple times a day for using all of your behavioural and mindset skills.
- ☆ **Respond to any sabotaging thoughts.** Expect to have sabotaging thoughts periodically for a very long time. You will get better and better at responding to them, but you will need to pull out your Response Cards whenever you are having difficulty. I would also like you to read them periodically, even if you don't think it is necessary. Most of the maintainers I work with read their cards weekly when they first reach maintenance. Then once every two weeks, then once a month, and then a few times a year. Remember to use the Seven Question Technique and create a new Response Card whenever you identify new sabotaging thoughts.
- ☆ **Eat the same amount of food and same number of calories that you have been eating as you stabilised your weight.** If you find that you want to eat more, make a conscious decision to set a new Lowest Maintainable Weight.
- ☆ **Continue to plan and monitor what you eat.** As you already learned, at some point you can experiment with planning and monitoring mentally. Even if you are not writing down a specific food plan, you will need to have a general plan of what you are going to eat each day. After a while, you might be able to get to the point where you don't necessarily need to decide the night before what you are going to have for each snack or meal. You know you will most likely choose from among your regular menus.
- ☆ **Create menus.** Research shows that successful maintainers tend to eat many of the same foods from day to day. Most of the maintainers I have worked with have about three different breakfast and lunch menus and about eight different dinner and snack menus. They don't limit themselves to these menus, but they

eat these meals most of the time. Having limited options makes life easier. You know which kinds of food can keep you at your Lowest Maintainable Weight. And you know which foods you will need to shop for every week and how long it will take to prepare each meal.

- ☆ **Eat consistently day to day.** Research also shows that you are more likely to maintain your weight if you don't vary your caloric intake significantly from one day to the next. That means that you might eat more on special occasions but not a lot more, and you won't vary much whether it is a weekend or a weekday.
- ☆ **Use good eating habits.** Make sure you continually eat slowly, while sitting down, noticing every bite, and stopping when you are just mildly full.
- ☆ **Keep up your exercise.** This means both spontaneous and planned, at least to the same degree as when you reached your Lowest Maintainable Weight. If your circumstances change and you need to exercise less, you might have to adjust your Lowest maintainable Weight. Exercise is often one of the first things to drop off people's to-do list when they get busy. But research shows that it is an essential part of maintenance. Don't let yourself go more than a week (two at the most) without doing planned exercise. Do spontaneous exercise every day, no matter what.
- ☆ **Continue to get support.** Even at the maintenance phase, it is important to check in at least once a month with your weight loss coach. if for no other reason than to keep yourself honest. In addition, your coach can help you solve problems and offer emotional support during stressful times. Both will prevent you from reverting to eating as a coping strategy. Even when you are not feeling particularly stressed, you might need occasional help in continuing to create enough time and energy to maintain your weight.
- ☆ **Take pleasure in your weight loss and in your level of fitness.** Remind yourself every day how much you enjoy being slimmer, healthier, and more physically fit – and how much you want to stay this way.
- ☆ **Can I just listen to my body?**

When many dieters reach maintenance, they ask me whether they can stop following a plan and instead follow their natural hunger cues, eating when they

feel hungry and stopping once they feel full. I personally have never worked with a maintainer who could use hunger as a guide instead of planning what he or she is going to eat or sticking to a general routine of meals and snacks. If you want to try, it's probably better to wait quite a while because you might still have a tendency to mislabel a desire or craving as hunger. When you do try, watch the scale. If you regain weight, go back to planning.

Important!!

Remember how great it feels to have reached your goal and to be slim. You're not going to slip back to your old habits and regain weightare you?

Together we will ensure you maintain your new weight, we are here to support and guide you through every step of your journey. However we can only do this if you commit to attend your maintenance sessions and keep in touch with us. Even if you do regain some weight don't hide away and feel ashamed, everyone slips from time to time it's called being human. Let us help you to get back on track and back to your goal weight.

**“Our greatest glory consists not in never falling,
but in rising every time we fall.”**

Oliver Goldsmith